

**James Madison to Noah Webster, March 10, 1826.
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
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TO NOAH WEBSTER.¹

¹ From "A Collection of Papers on Political, Literary and Moral Subjects." By Noah Webster, LL.D. New York, 1843, p. 172.

See the letter of Oct. 12, 1804, to Webster, *ante*, Vol. VII., p. 164, which this letter amends. The member who introduced Madison's motion in the Virginia legislature was John Tyler.

Montpelier, March 10, 1826.

Dear Sir —In my letter of Oct. 12, 1804, answering an inquiry of yours of Aug. 20, it was stated that "in 1785, I made a proposition with success in the legislature, (of Virginia,) for the appointment of commissioners, to meet at Annapolis such commissioners as might be appointed by other states, in order to form some plan for investing Congress with the regulation and taxation of commerce." In looking over some of my papers having reference to that period, I find reason to believe that the impression, under which I made the statement, was erroneous; and that the proposition, though probably growing out of efforts made by myself to convince the legislature of the necessity of investing Congress with such powers, was introduced by another member, more likely to have the ear of the legislature on the occasion, than one whose long and late service in Congress, might subject him to the suspicion of a bias in favor of that body. The journals of the session

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would ascertain the fact. But such has been the waste of the printed copies, that I have never been able to consult one.

I have no apology to make for the error committed by my memory, but my consciousness, when answering your inquiry, of the active part I took in making on the legislature the impressions from which the measure resulted, and the confounding of one proposition with another, as may have happened to your own recollection of what passed.

It was my wish to have set you right on a point to which your letter seemed to attach some little interest, as soon as I discovered the error into which I had fallen. But whilst I was endeavouring to learn the most direct address, the newspapers apprised me that you had embarked for Europe. Finding that your return may be daily looked for, I lose no time in giving the proper explanation. I avail myself of the occasion to express my hopes that your trip to Europe, has answered all your purposes in making it, and to tender you assurances of my sincere esteem and friendly respects.